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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY
STATE PLEASE PASS USAID

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SUBJECT: NIGER DELTA: VP ENGAGES THE DONORS

ABUJA 00001391 001.2 OF 002

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¶1. (U) Summary: Nigerian Vice President Goodluck Jonathan met with representatives of lead donor agencies on June 27 to consult with them regarding the Niger Delta. The Vice President said that stabilizing the Delta is his top priority, but offered little in the way of concrete plans or programs. While stressing their commitment to Delta development, the donors insisted that their comparative advantage was not to bring financial resources but rather to give technical advice and other support in order to help the states and national government better utilize existing resources. USAID Mission Director highlighted existing U.S. assistance efforts in the Delta and encouraged the GON to increase transparency in its development programs to build citizen confidence. Dr. Jonathan promised that the dialogue between the GON and donors will continue in coming months and mentioned the possibility of convening an Ambassadorial meeting on the Niger Delta in early July. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Vice President Goodluck Jonathan invited the main donor agencies to a June 27 meeting on development in the Niger Delta. He described the meeting as an attempt to "engage key donor partners on the Delta." The country directors of USAID, DFID, the World Bank, and UNDP all attended the meeting. The Vice President was accompanied by one of his special assistants, Akachukwu Nwankpo. Dr. Jonathan said that stabilizing the Delta is his top priority. He indicated that his intention is to talk to criminal elements in the Delta and ask them to put down their weapons and work with government to improve conditions in the region. The Vice President asked the donors to continue assisting the GON to develop the region, and he stressed the importance of employment creation as a way to draw young men out of militancy. He noted, however, that it would be very difficult to create sufficient jobs in the short term. The Vice President believes that in the long term, most militants would respond to job opportunities, but he acknowledged that the few remaining hard core militants would have to be dealt with by the security services. The administration also noted the need for additional road construction in the region, to

reduce the number of remote, unreachable areas cut off from both economic opportunities and the security services. Though he admitted that the GON and the state governments have a great deal of money at their disposal for development projects, Jonathan told the donors that even this money is not enough to fund the development needs of the Niger Delta region, and he asked the donors to continue to fund projects in the region.

¶3. (U) USAID Acting Mission Director focused her remarks on continuing and strengthening existing structures, such as the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Process, public-private partnerships to generate employment, and USAID's ongoing partnership with Bayelsa state government. She emphasized the need to determine one common framework for sustainable development in the Delta, rather than different arrangements with each of the states in the region. The acting Mission Director also asked the Vice President to consider increasing transparency of both state and NDDC resources as a way to build the confidence of the region's citizens. She suggested that existing USAID programs in the Delta focusing on agriculture, finance sector reform, governance/civil society, and job training can help to build capacity at the state level.

¶4. (SBU) All the donor agencies stressed that their comparative advantage is not to bring additional financial resources to the Delta, but rather to give technical advice and other support in order to help the states and national government better utilize existing resources for development. The Vice President was insistent that the funds held by the states and the Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) are not enough to achieve major projects like road construction, electricity generation, water treatment, and purchase of marine vessels. The World Bank said that they would consider providing credit for such activities if the current administration asked them to do so. USAID and the other

ABUJA 00001391 002.2 OF 002

donors stood firm that they could not bring additional financial resources to the Delta at this time.

¶5. (SBU) Though the meeting offered little in the way of concrete new plans or programs by the GON to address Niger Delta development, the donors were pleased to see that the Vice President is dedicated to addressing problems in the region. Both the government and the donors agree on the need for employment generation in the region, despite diverging views on whether additional donor money is needed for the Delta at this time. Dr. Jonathan promised that this dialogue would continue regularly in future and he mentioned that an Ambassadorial meeting on the Delta could be convened in early July.
CAMPBELL